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AUTHOR Fredericksen, Marlene
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ABSTRACT

In 1991, a study was conducted of semester-to-semester persistence patterns at Rancho Santiago College (RSC). The study involved tracking the attendance patterns of all RSC students entering as new students in fall 1983 and each subsequent fall until 1990; and comparing the persistence rates of matriculated and non-matriculated students in the fall 1988 cohort. Major study findings included the following: (1) of the students who initially enrolled in any fall semester, 37% to 50% returned the following spring, and 23% to 33% remained active one year later; (2) students who reported that their goal was to transfer with an associate of arts degree had a persistence rate of 61% to 66% one semester later, while students who enrolled for personal interest had a 27% to 39% persistence rate one semester later; (3) Asian students had the highest persistence rates, followed by Hispanic, White, and Black students; (4) beginning with the 1986 group, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services and financial aid students were tracked separately, showing persistence rates of 87% to 98%, the highest of any group; (5) compared to the general student population, matriculated students demonstrated much greater persistence over two and three semesters after initial enrollment; and (6) students enrolled only in evening courses showed the poorest persistence whether they were matriculated or not. (JMC)

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RANCHO SANTIAGO COLLEGE
RESEARCH • PLANNING
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Report

PATHWAYS OF STUDENT PERSISTENCE AT RSC

(Includes Persistence of Matriculants)

Marlene Fredericksen

September 1991

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project is to describe student semester-to-semester persistence patterns at RSC. This report is divided into two major sections. The first has to do with all RSC students and the second identifies and compares new students who have received matriculation services and those who have not.

In Part I, the study begins with all new RSC students in the Fall 1983 semester and "tracks" those students' attendance. Persistence rates by semester are provided for the total group and by student characteristics.

All persistence rates are relative to the first semester of attendance. Thus, in Table 1-1 of the original group who entered in Fall 1988, 14% were still actively enrolled six semesters later in Spring 1991.

The study was expanded with the Fall 1988 cohort. Matriculated students, i.e., those who were non-exempt from receiving matriculation services and had a needs assessment completed (indicating that they did receive some services), were tracked as a separate group in order to compare their persistence rates to those of new students who had not received matriculation services. A summary of those findings is found in Part II.

PART I

**All Students
Persistence Trends (1983-1990)**

OVERVIEW OF PART I FINDINGS

- ♦ Of the students who initially enroll in a given fall semester, 37 to 50% of them return the following Spring, and 23 to 33% remain active one year later. For the 1983 group of new students, 23% are enrolled four semesters later, 18% remain active five semesters later, and 5% are in attendance twelve semesters after enrolling (Table 1-1). Persistence rates for the other fall semester cohorts are consistent with these findings. **It is noteworthy that persistence rates began to increase with the Fall 1989 group. Perhaps, this is the beginning of a trend.**
- ♦ After the initial relatively large attrition between the first and second semesters, the persistence rates decline more gradually. This trend is consistent with all cohorts sampled (Table 1-1).
- ♦ It is important to consider persistence rates of students with different educational goals. Students who reported that their goal is to transfer with an AA degree show a persistence rate of 61% to 66% one semester later, and 45% to 51% remain active one year later. On the other hand, students who enrolled for personal interest have a 27% to 39% rate one semester later, and 14% to 21% remain active one year later (Table 1-3).
- ♦ Asian students continue to demonstrate the highest persistence rates followed by Hispanic, White, and Black students (Tables 1-4 to 1-7).
- ♦ Beginning with the 1986 group, EOPS and Financial Aid students have been tracked. From Tables 1-7 and 1-8 it can be seen that their persistence rates of 87-98% after one semester are clearly the highest of any group shown. Persistence rates of EOPS students continue high in subsequent semesters.

TABLE 1-1
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER
PERSISTENCE RATES FOR EACH GROUP OF ENTERING STUDENTS

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	45%	28%	23%	18%	15%	12%	10%	8%	7%	6%	5%
Fall 1984 Group	41	26	21	17	14	11	9	6			
Fall 1985 Group	42	26	21	17	16	10	9				
Fall 1986 Group	40	25	20	14	12						
Fall 1987 Group	42	23	19	*							
Fall 1988 Group	37	26	21	17	14						
Fall 1989 Group	47	33	28								
Fall 1990 Group	50										

* Reliable figures are no longer available for cohorts beginning prior to 1988 because of a change in the way student identification numbers are issued.

TABLE 1-2
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR STUDENTS WITH EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE OF "TRANSFER WITH AA DEGREE"

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	66%	50%	43%	37%	29%	21%	19%	15%	14%	11%	9%
Fall 1984 Group	64	51	44	33	28	21	17	14	12		
Fall 1985 Group	66	47	39	34	30	20	18				
Fall 1986 Group	61	48	40	32	27						
Fall 1987 Group	64	46	39	*							
Fall 1988 Group	61	48	40	30	24						
Fall 1989 Group	64	45	40								
Fall 1990 Group	66										

TABLE 1-3
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR STUDENTS WITH EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE OF "PERSONAL INTEREST"

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	32%	17%	13%	9%	7%	7%	7%	5%	6%	4%	5%
Fall 1984 Group	28	16	12	8	8	7	6	5	5		
Fall 1985 Group	34	16	13	9	9	7	5				
Fall 1986 Group	32	18	13	7	6						
Fall 1987 Group	34	14	11	*							
Fall 1988 Group	27	14	11	6	5						
Fall 1989 Group	37	21	12								
Fall 1990 Group	39										

* Reliable figures are no longer available for cohorts beginning prior to 1988 because of a change in the way student identification numbers are issued.

TABLE 1-4
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR ASIAN STUDENTS

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	66%	48%	39%	35%	28%	19%	17%	12%	11%	8%	6%
Fall 1984 Group	59	46	40	29	24	19	14	11	10		
Fall 1985 Group	61	43	36	28	23	14	13				
Fall 1986 Group	56	40	32	22	19						
Fall 1987 Group	55	36	29	*							
Fall 1988 Group	49	35	30	23	19						
Fall 1989 Group	60	42	36								
Fall 1990 Group	55										

TABLE 1-5
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR WHITE STUDENTS

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	41%	25%	20%	16%	13%	11%	9%	7%	6%	5%	4%
Fall 1984 Group	39	24	18	14	12	9	8	5	5		
Fall 1985 Group	38	23	18	14	14	9	8				
Fall 1986 Group	36	22	18	12	10						
Fall 1987 Group	39	21	17	*							
Fall 1988 Group	34	22	18	14	12						
Fall 1989 Group	43	29	25								
Fall 1990 Group	47										

* Reliable figures are no longer available for cohorts beginning prior to 1988 because of a change in the way student identification numbers are issued.

TABLE 1-6
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR HISPANIC STUDENTS

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	45%	26%	22%	17%	16%	14%	11%	9%	9%	3%	6%
Fall 1984 Group	41	26	23	18	15	12	11	9	8		
Fall 1985 Group	45	28	23	19	18	14	12				
Fall 1986 Group	42	28	22	15	14						
Fall 1987 Group	44	23	21	*							
Fall 1988 Group	41	31	27	24	19						
Fall 1989 Group	51	37	30								
Fall 1990 Group	53										

TABLE 1-7
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1983 Group	39%	20%	17%	11%	9%	8%	8%	6%	6%	4%	3%
Fall 1984 Group	33	22	18	15	13	10	9	8	5		
Fall 1985 Group	33	19	16	12	10	7	6				
Fall 1986 Group	32	23	19	10	10						
Fall 1987 Group	55	36	29	*							
Fall 1988 Group	37	26	26	16	14						
Fall 1989 Group	47	30	24								
Fall 1990 Group	44										

* Reliable figures are no longer available for cohorts beginning prior to 1988 because of a change in the way student identification numbers are issued.

TABLE 1-8
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR EOPS STUDENTS ♦

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1986 Group	97%	48%	68%	47%	47%						
Fall 1987 Group	98	86	78	*							
Fall 1988 Group	90	85	79	61	52						
Fall 1989 Group	89	79	70								
Fall 1990 Group	89										

TABLE 1-9
SEMESTER-TO-SEMESTER PERSISTENCE
FOR FINANCIAL AID STUDENTS ♦

Semesters Enrolled After Initial Enrollment											
Cohort	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Fall 1986 Group	91%	42%	45%	28%	28%						
Fall 1987 Group	91	55	26	*							
Fall 1988 Group	87	55	56	33	38						
Fall 1989 Group	93	56	57								
Fall 1990 Group	91										

♦ Students do not necessarily remain qualified for EOPS and/or financial aid every semester although they may persist in school.

* Reliable figures are no longer available for cohorts beginning prior to 1988 because of a change in the way student identification numbers are issued.

PART II

Matriculated and Non-Matriculated Students

DESCRIPTION

The following are the RSC criteria by which a student is considered non-exempt from receiving matriculation services:

- ♦ Any student who plans to complete 12 units at Rancho Santiago College either this semester or in future semesters, or
- ♦ Plans to enroll in an English composition, reading, English as a Second Language (ESL), or math course, or
- ♦ Plans to obtain an Associate Degree, occupational certificate, or transfer to a four-year college or university.

Beginning with Fall 1988, students who were identified as having met one or more of the above criteria, and who had a needs assessment completed, were identified as "matriculated students" for this portion of the study. All other students are grouped as "non-matriculated".

Since matriculated students have been assessed, advised and placed in appropriate courses, it was hoped that they would have higher persistence rates than students not receiving those services. In order to test that notion, the two groups, matriculated and non-matriculated, are being tracked for persistence comparison purposes.

OVERVIEW OF PART II FINDINGS

- ♦ Compared to the general student population, matriculated students demonstrated much greater persistence over two and three semesters after initial enrollment. Out of the 1833 matriculated students enrolling in Fall 1988, 62% (n= 1129) were active the following spring. Forty-six percent (n=848) of the original group were active in Fall 1989, and 28% were still active in Fall 1990 (Table 4-1). **These rates are 20 percentage points greater than the persistence rates for all students compiled for 1983-1989. (Table 1-1)**
- ♦ For this comparison, however, it is important to compare similar groups. Most RSC students who received matriculation services have been found to be transfer-objective students. When comparing non-matriculated to matriculated students of the Fall 1988 transfer-objective cohort, it can be seen that students who received matriculation services persisted to a second semester at significantly higher rates (67%) than the 1988 student cohort who had not received services (39%). This difference has continued with subsequent cohorts (Table 2-2).
- ♦ The 1990 cohort continues to demonstrate that **those who have participated in matriculation services have higher persistence rates in almost all categories than those who have not** (Tables 5-1).
- ♦ Transfer-objective matriculated students also have much greater third semester persistence rates than non-matriculated students with a transfer objective. Table 2-1 shows those rates at 25% for non-matriculated students in the 1988 cohort compared to 58% for those who had received matriculation services. This difference is also exhibited by the Fall 1989 and 1990 groups.
- ♦ Asian students, both matriculated and non-matriculated, have the highest persistence rates, followed by Hispanic students.
- ♦ EOPS and Financial Aid students show the highest persistence rates. However, EOPS and Financial Aid matriculated student rates have not generally been higher than those of EOPS and Financial Aid non-matriculated students (Tables 2-3).
- ♦ **Students who are only enrolled in evening courses continue to show the poorest persistence whether they are matriculated or not; however, matriculated students persist at higher rates than the non-matriculated.** Those who enroll in both day and evening classes have the highest persistence (Table 2-4).

Section 1

Persistence Trends

TABLE 2-1
SEMESTER TO SEMESTER PERSISTENCE BY EDUCATIONAL GOAL

	2nd semester		3rd semester		4th semester		5th semester		6th semester	
	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %
Fall 1988 Group										
AA Transfer	71	46	56	34	48	28	37	19	30	14
AA Vocational	63	45	44	31	35	24	27	14	22	9
Transfer Only	67	39	58	25	49	19	29	14	27	10
Personal Interest	42	25	26	12	16	9	12	5	11	3
Employment	45	15	33	9	36	6	23	6	22	4
Fall 1989 Group										
AA Transfer	71	57	51	39	46	34				
AA Vocational	62	53	58	40	51	28				
Transfer Only	71	50	69	42	67	35				
Personal Interest	41	36	28	19	14	11				
Employment	42	36	29	20	24	16				
Fall 1990 Group										
AA Transfer	72	52								
AA Vocational	64	50								
Transfer Only	73	52								
Personal Interest	53	33								
Employment	53	33								

TABLE 2-2
SEMESTER TO SEMESTER PERSISTENCE BY ETHNICITY

	2nd semester		3rd semester		4th semester		5th semester		6th semester	
	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %
Fall 1988 Group										
Asian	68	31	51	19	45	14	37	9	32	6
Black	60	21	41	15	43	13	24	10	26	5
Hispanic	62	24	49	17	43	13	37	14	33	8
White	59	25	44	15	36	12	29	10	25	8
Fall 1989 Group										
Asian	71	51	56	30	54	21				
Black	51	44	39	23	30	19				
Hispanic	57	45	50	26	42	21				
White	53	40	43	26	40	21				
Fall 1990 Group										
Asian	66	41								
Black	59	26								
Hispanic	62	40								
White	62	40								

TABLE 2-3
SEMESTER TO SEMESTER PERSISTENCE BY FINANCIAL AID AND EOPS

	2nd semester		3rd semester		4th semester		5th semester		6th semester	
	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %
Fall 1988 Group										
Financial Aid	89	65	56	48	56	52	34	26	39	26
EOPS	91	69	84	100 *	78	92	61	54	52	46
Fall 1989 Group										
Financial Aid	89	116 *	58	39	60	36				
EOPS	88	100	80	72	72	56				
Fall 1990 Group										
Financial Aid	91	95								
EOPS	89	93								

* Financial aid and EOPS may be awarded and recorded retroactively hence the anomaly in this percentage. Students do not necessarily remain qualified for EOPS and/or financial aid every semester although they may persist in school.

TABLE 2-4
SEMESTER TO SEMESTER PERSISTENCE BY DAY/NIGHT

	2nd semester		3rd semester		4th semester		5th semester		6th semester	
	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %	Mat. %	Non-Mat. %
Fall 1988 Group										
Day students	63	20	46	14	37	10	29	9	25	7
Night students	35	21	32	13	24	9	22	8	18	7
Both	78	47	57	27	54	26	41	19	39	11
Fall 1989 Group										
Day students	54	45	39	26	35	20				
Night students	44	31	38	18	29	16				
Both	71	56	65	40	62	31				
Fall 1990 Group										
Day students	59	40								
Night students	40	32								
Both	62	51								

Section 2

Persistence of 1988 Cohort

TABLE 3-1
PERSISTENCE RATE OF MATRICULATED AND NON-MATRICULATED 1988 COHORT

CATEGORY	F 88		SP 89 ACTIVE %		F 89 ACTIVE %		SP 90 ACTIVE %		F 90 ACTIVE %		SP 91 ACTIVE %	
	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.
Active N=	1833	3890	62	25	46	16	40	13	32	10	28	8
ETHNICITY												
Am Indian	23	59	65	20	52	15	35	12	30	10	26	7
Black	80	108	60	19	41	15	43	13	24	10	26	5
Asian	382	373	68	31	51	19	45	14	37	9	32	6
Pacific Islander	23	25	35	24	35	12	22	8	13	0	17	0
Hispanic	421	534	62	24	49	17	43	13	37	14	33	8
Filipino	24	40	71	27	33	22	29	15	13	10	25	13
White	865	2710	59	25	44	15	36	12	29	10	25	8
Other	15	41	60	22	33	15	53	15	53	12	20	7
DAY/NIGHT STATUS												
Day students	796	1534	63	20	46	14	37	10	29	9	25	7
Evening students	422	1668	35	21	32	13	24	9	22	8	18	7
Both	615	688	78	47	57	27	54	26	41	19	39	11
SEX												
Male	933	1882	64	23	48	15	40	12	32	9	28	7
Female	900	2008	59	26	45	16	39	13	32	11	28	8
EDUCATIONAL GOAL												
Vocational Certificate	119	293	61	32	40	15	377	10	27	9	22	7
AA Transfer	651	416	71	46	56	34	48	28	37	19	30	14
AA Vocational	260	203	63	45	44	31	35	24	27	14	22	9
Transfer Only	252	278	67	39	58	25	49	19	29	14	27	10
Personal Interest	190	1128	42	25	26	12	16	9	12	5	11	3
Employment	212	1217	45	15	33	9	36	6	23	6	22	4
Other	149	355	58	31	39	16	33	19	15	8	14	6
CITIZEN												
US	1331	3403	59	24	45	15	38	12	29	10	25	8
Non-US	393	409	71	43	52	21	49	28	49	16	30	5
DEGREE												
High School Diploma	1267	2572	63	26	47	17	42	14	36	13	32	10
GED	61	141	46	23	33	10	30	8	21	8	26	6
Certificate of Equivalency	11	23	64	9	55	4	73	4	45	4	36	4
Proficiency Exam	22	24	41	37	23	21	23	20	23	13	18	6
Certificate of Completion	16	33	56	24	50	12	50	9	44	6	19	6
Foreign Diploma	101	200	59	32	42	19	38	13	31	13	24	7
OTHER												
Financial Aid	219	23	89	65	56	48	56	52	34	26	39	26
EOPS	172	13	91	69	84	100	78	92	61	51	52	46

Section 3

Persistence of 1989 Cohort

TABLE 4-1
PERSISTENCE RATE OF MATRICULATED AND NON-MATRICULATED STUDENTS 1989 COHORT

CATEGORY	FALL 89		SPRING 90 - ACTIVE %		FALL 90 - ACTIVE %		SPRING 91 - ACTIVE %	
	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.
Active N=	1954	4438	59	43	48	26	43	21
ETHNICITY								
Am Indian	27	59	41	44	37	30	26	29
Black	99	128	51	44	39	23	30	19
Asian	400	503	71	51	56	30	54	21
Pacific Islander	18	24	61	50	39	29	50	17
Hispanic	711	800	57	45	50	26	42	21
Filipino	23	49	57	33	35	18	26	20
White	651	2809	53	40	43	26	40	21
Other	17	65	88	48	47	20	41	12
DAY/NIGHT STATUS								
Day students	1027	1858	54	45	39	26	35	20
Evening students	309	1617	44	31	38	18	29	16
Both	618	963	71	56	65	40	62	31
SEX							43	
Male	988	2299	58	46	48	29	43	23
Female	966	2139	58	38	48	24		18
EDUCATIONAL GOAL								
Vocational Certificate	114	259	57	49	30	28	32	24
AA Transfer	542	498	71	57	51	39	46	34
AA Vocational	146	178	62	53	58	40	51	28
Transfer Only	195	281	71	50	69	42	67	35
Personal Interest	185	753	41	36	26	19	14	11
Employment	419	1287	42	36	29	20	24	16
Other	353	1179	56	43	61	28	60	22
CITIZEN								
US	1233	3703	54	41	44	26	39	21
Non-US	596	673	65	47	56	39	33	12
DEGREE								
High School Diploma	1385	3217	63	42	52	28	47	23
GED	74	161	39	43	24	25	22	19
Certificate of Equivalency	11	21	36	57	27	33	9	33
Proficiency Exam	8	23	13	39	36	48	50	35
Certificate of Completion	6	30	17	23	-	20	50	10
Foreign Diploma	168	291	58	52	56	32	57	22
OTHER								
Financial Aid	323	44	89	116	58	39	60	36
EOPS	266	32	88	100	80	72	72	56

Section 4

Persistence of 1990 Cohort

TABLE 5-1
PERSISTENCE RATE OF MATRICULATED AND NON-MATRICULATED STUDENTS 1990 COHORT

CATEGORY	FALL 90		SPRING 91 - ACTIVE %		FALL 91 - ACTIVE %	
	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.	Mat.	Non-Mat.
Active N=	2817	3599	63	40		
ETHNICITY						
Am Indian	43	39	58	38		
Black	122	101	59	26		
Asian	580	411	66	41		
Pacific Islander	29	18	69	39		
Hispanic	955	698	62	40		
Filipino	51	35	61	37		
White	988	2223	62	40		
Other	49	74	65	41		
DAY/NIGHT STATUS						
Day students	1503	1478	59	40		
Evening students	484	1303	40	32		
Both	830	818	82	51		
SEX						
Male	1485	1855	63	41		
Female	1332	1774	62	38		
EDUCATIONAL GOAL						
Vocational Certificate	162	220	56	52		
AA Transfer	661	329	72	52		
AA Vocational	171	123	64	50		
Transfer Only	313	207	73	52		
Personal Interest	283	763	53	33		
Employment	605	1057	53	33		
Other	622	900	63	41		
CITIZEN						
US	1831	3032	60	39		
Non-US	620	346	67	38		
DEGREE						
High School Diploma	2080	2717	65	38		
GED	107	160	47	41		
Certificate of Equivalency	15	18	67	39		
Proficiency Exam	24	20	58	35		
Certificate of Completion	14	21	29	43		
Foreign Diploma	285	261	67	52		
OTHER						
Financial Aid	365	22	91	95		
EOPS	212	15	89	93		

ERIC Clearinghouse for
Junior Colleges

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